

## Europe: Unity Talk

Italian President Segni came to Washington last week as the dialogue waxed in Western capitals on the issue of European union.

As a British publication acidly observed a week or so ago, now that Defense Secretary McNamara has demobilized the Russian Army and the CIA has put the Soviet economy on a toboggan, the Western nations are increasingly inclined to thrash out publicly the thorny intra-alliance issue of European union.

And last week the thrashing was heavy. Everywhere Western leaders were on the move. Italian President Segni visited President Johnson in Washington; West German Chancellor Erhard flew to London for talks with Prime Minister Home, and Canadian Premier Pearson went to Paris for a session with President de Gaulle.

European union was a topic in all these talks. In Washington and London it was a major item, along with the question of relaxing tensions with the Soviet Union. In Paris, where they was no coincidence of views on the subject, it was a minor one.

Washington is strongly urging that Europe unite as an interdependent partner of the United States.

On the other hand, Gen. de Gaulle, a powerful and persistent statesman, is intent on creating a loose European federation which would be allied to the United States, but independent of it. And Britain would not be included in the union, at least at the outset.

The communiques issued in Washington and London after the respective high-level talks underscore the isolation in which France (Gen. de Gaulle) is now placed. And additional statements by Mr. Segni and Dr. Erhard gave even further proof of it.

Speaking before a joint session of Congress on Wednesday, the Italian leader called for a unified Europe, including Britain, which would have strong, "indissoluble"

ties with the United States.

In London, Dr. Erhard declared that a "happy, prosperous and free Europe" could only be achieved if Britain were a part of it.

Meanwhile, in Paris, if Gen. de Gaulle was alone, he was in "splendid isolation." Mr. Pearson advised his host that he favored a biqader European union than the Frenchman envisioned. If the general was disappointed, the Canadian probably soothed his feelings by asserting that he wished to ship uranium to France—uranium which would be used in the building of France's independent nuclear force.

Then, as if to underline his independence of United States pressure and persuasion, the French President let it be known on Friday that France would soon formally recognize Red China. He apparently won a concession from Peking in the process—it was understood that the Communist regime had agreed to the estab-

lishment of diplomatic ties without a demand that Paris break relations with the Nationalist Chinese on Formosa. The De Gaulle action has annoyed Washington, but left it with little to fight about. The United States' closest ally, Great Britain, has recognized Peking for more than a decade. So have several other NATO nations—Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands.

If it is highly improbable that there can be a real European union without Britain, it is even more improbable that there can be one without France. An accommodation will have to be worked out, therefore, if the status quo is to be broken. One possibility lies in a pledge by Gen. de Gaulle that, if the Common Market Six—France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg—should band together in some kind of political union, Britain (and the Scandinavian countries) would be invited to join at a specific later date.